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Title Page

Article title: The ideological construction of legitimacy for pluricentric standards: Occitan and Catalan in France.

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The ideological construction of legitimacy for pluricentric standards: Occitan and Catalan in France.

Abstract

Bourdieu (1991) claims that the use of 'legitimate language' serves to maintain dominant power structures, with legitimacy determined by an array of economic and social conditions inherent in speech communities. Standard languages function as 'normalised products' (Bourdieu 1991) and are imbued with a greater degree of legitimacy than non-standard varieties due to the Standard Language Ideology (SLI, Lippi-Green 2012). This leads us to question what happens when a non-dominant language seeks to acquire greater legitimacy and prestige. Can standardisation increase legitimacy for varieties subjected to centuries of political and ideological subordination? What then happens to minority languages when there is not one clear standard, but rather a pluricentric situation with competing solutions? We examine speaker testimonies regarding the standardisation of Occitan and Catalan in France. We show that the discursive construction of legitimacy for standard varieties is contingent on the ideological creation of linguistic difference. We conclude that the application of the SLI to non-dominant language varieties results in the complex renegotiation of value in the Bourdieusian 'linguistic market', which is clearly attestable at the individual, discursive level. We recommend that attempts to subvert existing hegemony and challenge social order need to address underlying ideologies held by minority language speakers.

Keywords

Language standardisation, language ideologies, minority languages, language revitalisation, French studies.

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Introduction

For centuries, homogenised standard languages have functioned as gatekeeping devices, maintaining hegemonic order by privileging the language varieties of those in positions of power. These languages exist thanks to the Standard Language Ideology (SLI), defined as a “bias toward an abstracted, idealised, homogenous spoken language which is imposed and maintained by dominant bloc institutions” (Lippi-Green 2012: 67). This can result in the marginalisation of users of varieties that somehow deviate from the standard – indeed, the notion that standards are singular models that can be ‘deviated from’ is in itself contingent on the SLI. In the French context, language is closely connected to notions of belonging, statehood and group membership, with French having been constructed as the sole linguistic vehicle of Republican values since the French Revolution (cf. Hawkey 2018: 20-23). This has led to what Encrevé (2007: 23, my translation) terms the *idéologie linguistique française* (French language ideology), in which ‘the citizen must not only speak French, but must speak *only* French.’ However, France is not a linguistically homogeneous territory and many regional and minority languages (RMLs) coexist alongside French in varying degrees of obsolescence. What are the consequences of this complex ideological landscape for these RMLs, many of which lack homogeneous standard varieties? Could RMLs implement the SLI in order to boost their own legitimacy, relative to the majority language of French? How is the SLI applied to heterogeneous, minoritised languages, when its main purpose is to lend legitimacy to homogeneous, majority varieties?

Focusing on Occitan and Catalan in southern France, this article qualitatively analyses interview data with RML speakers in order to explore how notions of standardisation are received in these languages, and how legitimacy is ideologically constructed. We will see that Occitan and Catalan are, to a degree, pluricentric languages, seemingly at odds with the idea of the standard, which so often presupposes a degree of homogeneity and monocentricity. In the first section, we give an overview of the SLI and how it has been adapted to meet pluricentric scenarios. We then offer the necessary contextual background, by outlining the development of processes of standardisation of Occitan and Catalan in France. Subsequently,

the methods and data analysis are presented, focusing on the themes most pertinent to the ideological construction of legitimacy in these languages. Finally, some brief conclusions interrogate the construction of legitimacy and underscore the importance of this work in understanding how speakers of minority languages can attempt to subvert societal hegemony and effect social change.

Standard Language Ideology and Pluricentricity

Language ideologies, broadly defined as “sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalisation or justification of perceived language structure and use” (Silverstein 1979: 193), are central to scholarly discussions of mechanisms of language standardisation. The SLI (defined above) pinpoints one variety as ‘correct’ and ensures awareness among members of the speech community (Milroy 2001: 535-536). This has important consequences for social structure: Bourdieu (1989: 47) maintains that all language possesses a given value in the ‘linguistic market’, defined as “a system of relations of force which determines the price of linguistic products and thus helps fashion linguistic production.” While different language varieties may gain or lose capital according to the specific, context-dependent characteristics of a given linguistic exchange, Bourdieu (1991: 53) maintains that ‘legitimate’ linguistic practices are those of the socially dominant group. Such legitimacy is derived from the SLI, which imbues standardised language with a higher degree of credibility relative to other, non-standard, ‘illegitimate’ forms of speaking (Milroy 2001: 547), and it is precisely this quality of the SLI that allows it to serve the broad purpose of creating and maintaining social power structures.

Language standardisation therefore brings about legitimacy, a preoccupation of groups wishing to create or bolster a claim to selfhood. Indeed, standardisation is a clear result of the modernity project (particularly, the nation-building enterprises) of the Enlightenment. In their comprehensive study of the standardisation of minority varieties, Costa *et al.* (2017: 4-5) highlight that standardisation processes in general were intended as tools of community reinforcement (or more accurately, creation), by associating ‘correct’ forms of language with decontextualised, neutral language varieties. This was supported in practice by the establishment of centralised national administration systems and compulsory education programs that used standardised varieties as means of instruction (Costa *et al.*

2017: 6). The association of standard languages with notions of modernity persists. Gal (2017: 223, 233) reminds us that standardisation is entirely contingent on the creation of difference, and that the key distinction is drawn along an *axis of modernity* – the standard language represents an enregistered assemblage of modern traits (anonymity, universality, reason, progress, literacy, centrality, homogeneity), while the non-standard, minoritised variety comes to signify opposing characteristics (authenticity, particularity/emplacedness, emotion, tradition, orality, peripherality, heterogeneity). As a result, there is a clear tension when minority varieties seek to embark on journeys towards standardisation. Costa *et al.* (2017: 11-12) highlight three distinct outcomes of this tension, which render minority language standardisation efforts different from national language projects:

- The low and unstable social status of minoritised communities.
- The contemporaneity of standardisation processes means that they are visible to potential beneficiaries. It is thus difficult to posit these new standards as unquestionable (unlike their national counterparts).
- For many national languages, the attempt was to promote monolingualism among the populace. This is clearly not the case for minority varieties, which must coexist with other languages.

Moreover, the heterogeneity inherent in non-standard varieties (indicated on Gal's axis of modernity) is at odds with the homogenising drive of standardisation processes, leading to a need for pluricentric standardisation solutions. The polynomic model (first proposed in Marcellesi 1983 for Corsican) eschews traditional hierarchical approaches to standardisation, in which one variety is selected as superior and is imbued with greater legitimacy. Instead, speakers reach a consensus that they all speak the same language, while tolerating regional variation. In practice, this can take the form of the use of multiple diatopic variants in settings that would otherwise favour the use of a single homogenised standard variety (cf. Sallabank 2010 for a detailed overview of implementation strategies of the polynomic model). The reconciliation of pluricentricity with the SLI will be shown to be highly complex and contingent on a range of context-specific issues. Moreover, this complexity is further nuanced when we bear in mind that, in the context of the regional languages of France, standard Occitan will be shown to be more pluricentric than Catalan. Multiple degrees of pluricentricity therefore need to be taken into consideration in the upcoming discussion.

As we have seen, language standardisation (as well as the acceptance and perpetuation of standard varieties) is highly ideological in nature (cf. Voloshinov 1973 [1929]), and we will examine the discursive practices employed by community members to create, maintain and question issues of legitimacy related to standard varieties of Occitan and Catalan. Issues of linguistic legitimacy necessarily place language varieties in hierarchies – Bourdieu's *legitimate language* is only 'socially dominant' relative to other, less legitimate forms of talk. Speakers are thus engaged in the ideological construction of difference between varieties and undertake this through a range of semiotic devices. The data analysis will highlight processes of *iconisation* (wherein a linguistic feature is seen to be somehow representative of its speech community on a social level), *fractal recursivity* (wherein sites of opposition and difference move from one level of relationship to another) and *erasure* (wherein certain facets of the sociolinguistic reality are rendered invisible due to ideological simplification) (Irvine and Gal 2000: 37-8). This will offer insight into how speakers construct linguistic difference, which is then used to grant legitimacy to (or withhold it from) standardised varieties. By extension, we will better understand how the SLI is operationalised in discourse, since we have seen that the accordance of legitimacy to language varieties is directly derived from the SLI. The sociolinguistic situation of Occitan and Catalan in France makes this case even more complex and interesting, given the pluricentric nature of the standards in question, and the lack of institutional support (to be discussed in the next section).

In short, the SLI serves the general purpose of creating and maintaining social hegemonic order, and the specific purpose of providing a key tool for speech communities that choose to pursue credible nation-building endeavours. Cases of pluricentricity offer particular challenges for standardisation projects, and the polynomic model is an attempt to reconcile the SLI with situations of linguistic heterogeneity. On a discursive level, speakers construct linguistic difference, which is then instrumental in bestowing the necessary legitimacy on any proposed standardised variety or varieties. In order to understand speakers' discursive practices linked to the SLI, we will now present a brief overview of the history of standardisation efforts in the communities under investigation.

History of Standardisation in Occitan and Catalan

The present article focuses exclusively on Occitan- and Catalan-speaking regions of France, and therefore, processes of standardisation should be viewed in the political and ideological context of the French Republic. A 1992 revision to the French Constitution of 1958 states that the “language of the Republic is French” (République Française 2008: article 2), and while an amendment in 2008 added that regional languages “belong to the cultural heritage of France” (République Française 2008: article 75.1), governmental support is still not forthcoming. Since the French Revolution, RMLs have been viewed as incompatible with Republican ideals, and these ideologies are mirrored in official governmental policies that favour and promote the use of French in all societal domains. Due to generations of gradual language shift, Occitan and Catalan find themselves in situations of obsolescence in France, and all speech community members are bilingual French speakers. The specificities of the French constitutional context (i.e. the lack of institutional support for RMLs), as well as the situation of advanced obsolescence, set the present case apart from other analogous discussions of new and native speakers of minority varieties in Western Europe (cf. O’Rourke and Ramallo 2018 on Galician, Lantto 2018 on Basque *inter alia*).

The modern *langue d’oc* dialect continuum covers a large geographical area in Southern France (and parts of Italy and Spain) and is commonly divided into six main dialects: Gascon in the southwest; central Lengadocian; Lemosin and Auvergnat to the north; Provençal in the southeast; Vivaro-Alpin above the Provençal region. As such, there is a vast amount of linguistic diversity attested over geographical space with varieties at opposite ends of the continuum exhibiting substantial structural differences in their spoken form. Nonetheless, the *langue d’oc* has been standardised in the form of Occitan. Today, two main grammatical and/or orthographical standards exist for writing the language, the Mistralian norm and the Classical norm, the latter being the primary system used in the limited educational, media, and public spaces afforded to these obsolescent language varieties.

The Mistralian norm was invented by Frédéric Mistral (1830-1914) and was specifically created to write in the Provençal dialect; this system is phonetically transparent from a French perspective, in that it replicates many sound-spelling correspondences present in standard French orthography such as the use of *ou* for the phoneme /u/. As a partial reaction to the predominance of Mistralian norm, the *Société d’Études Occitanes* was founded in 1935. This association was replaced, in 1945, by the *Institut d’Estudis Occitans*, with both associations establishing the term ‘Occitan’ to refer collectively to all *langue d’oc* varieties, a function

previously fulfilled by the term 'Provençal'. The standardisation process for Occitan began in 1935 with the publication of Louis Alibèrt's *Gramatica occitana segon los parlars lengadocians* ('Occitan grammar of Lengadocian dialects'), supplemented by further corpus planning efforts in the form of Alibèrt's (1966) *Dictionnaire occitan-français selon les parlars languedocians* ('Occitan-French dictionary for Lengadocian dialects'). The orthographical standard proposed by these works was based on high medieval (1100-1350) representations of central *langue d'oc* varieties together with some modern Lengadocian. Lengadocian is often considered to be the most conservative Occitan dialect (Wheeler 1988: 246) and therefore it was selected as the basis for the standard: 'le languedocien a vraiment, dans l'ensemble occitanophone, [...] vocation de parler directeur et référentiel' ('Lengadocian is, in the entire Occitan-speaking area, the most authoritative reference point') (Bec 1973: 20). During the 1970s, standardisation efforts were extended by adapting Alibèrt's standard orthographical system to Gascon (by Pierre Bec) and Provençal (by Robert Lafont). The standard Occitan orthographical system is based on the principle of a phonological diasystem, an abstract, standardised phonological reference point against which we can compare variation observed in the dialects. The aim of the diasystem, in short, is to at once represent all of the dialects and none of the dialects in particular (Bec 1973: 24).

The concept of the diasystemic standard implies, to a certain extent, that the standard Occitan language is polynomic or pluricentric, in that while there is an orthographical standard, morphosyntactic and phonological variation are recognised, accommodated, and valued in spoken varieties by language planning initiatives. The reality, however, is that the Occitan standard finds itself in (increasing) ideological conflict with a host of more localised language planning initiatives which use orthographical systems, including the Mistralian norm, that are thought, by their proponents, to more accurately and faithfully reflect the linguistic structures of their respective dialects. For Gascon (the variety addressed in this work), and specifically in Béarn, the Febusian norm is actively promoted as an alternative to the Classical norm by the *Enstitut Biarnés e Gascoû*. These more localised orthographical systems tend to promote literacy by facilitating the transfer of literacy from French; this often leads to the misconception that these systems incorrectly apply French orthography to the *langue d'oc*, which is an oversimplification of these corpus planning endeavours. While the reality of the Occitanist agenda, at least regarding orthography, is that it aims to support and accurately represent all varieties of Occitan, this has not been clearly conveyed to lay-

speakers and other more grass-roots language planners, leading to the frequent misconception the standard Occitan is an artificial language that all southern regions are expected to adopt.

Corpus planning in Catalan was largely undertaken by one specific agent, Pompeu Fabra (1868-1948), operating under the auspices of the linguistic section of the *Institut d'Estudis Catalans* (set up in 1911). Catalan literary and cultural output had undergone a renaissance in the nineteenth century, after a long period of stagnation. However, at this point, there was no standardised form of Catalan, and so Fabra set about creating the first dictionaries and treatises in the early twentieth century. With some minor modifications, these are still in place today, and Fabrian Catalan (based on multiple regional varieties, but mostly drawing from Central Catalan as spoken near Barcelona) remains the dominant normative standard. Regional standards derived in part from Fabrian Catalan norms have also appeared for other Catalan varieties (cf. Borja Moll 1968 for Balearic, Valor 1973 for Valencian). Attempts at regional standardisation of Northern Catalan (the autochthonous variety of Northern Catalonia) are still in their infancy. Camps and Bonet (2015) consists of a comprehensive three-way dictionary of Northern Catalan, Central Catalan and French. Gómez Duran (2016) is a thorough overview of Northern Catalan phonology and morphosyntax (and moreover is written in Northern Catalan). Peytaví Deixona (2016) proposes a Northern Catalan standard form, with detailed strategies regarding how best to implement this regional standard, informed by the latest advances in language policy theory. However, given the recentness of standardisation efforts in Northern Catalan, none of these are widely accepted at present.¹ As such, when referring to standard/non-standard varieties of Catalan in France, this article draws the distinction between Fabrian standard Catalan on one hand, and local (non-standard) Northern Catalan on the other. It should be noted that these two varieties are relatively structurally similar, although as we shall see, the creation of linguistic difference between standard and non-standard varieties is contingent on far more than typological distance. In France, standard Catalan is therefore less pluricentric than Occitan, since local

¹ Given the lack of institutional support for RMLs, there is no guaranteed presence of burgeoning local norms in policy and planning initiatives. For example, Catalan teachers in private immersion programmes often rely on existing educational materials from other Catalan-speaking regions (cf. Peix 2017), which are written in normative Fabrian Catalan.

standards are yet to attract widespread recognition – this may of course change in years to come as Northern Catalan standards gain ground (or not). Moreover, the broader pluricentric nature of Catalan (as encompassing Valencian and Balearic varieties) will prove relevant to our analysis.

Methodology

Qualitative findings were obtained during fieldwork conducted between March and September 2016 in various locations throughout southern France. The interviews and questionnaires cited below form part of two wider projects designed to investigate language obsolescence among speakers of Occitan (Mooney, forthcoming) and the links between language attitudes and phonetic variation in Catalan (Hawkey 2018). Research was conducted in the Occitan-speaking region of Béarn and the Catalan-speaking region of Northern Catalonia (see Figure 1). The autochthonous variety of Béarn is a subdialect of Gascon and was transcribed following the Classical norm. The Northern Catalan data was transcribed largely following Fabrian principles. The Occitan data comes exclusively from semi-structured sociolinguistic interviews (Labov 1984): a total of 47 speakers were interviewed in various locations throughout Béarn. The Catalan data is drawn from a combination of semi-structured interviews with 29 Catalan speakers in Northern Catalonia and the open-ended answers of a questionnaire distributed to 311 respondents throughout the region.



Figure 1: Regions of study (adapted from Wikimedia Commons user Giro270)

The demographic details of the fourteen participants who provided data discussed in the present article are given in Table 1. These were selected from the wider sample as they represented the broadest range of opinions on issues related to minority language standardisation. In the Occitan data sample, most participants could be classed as ‘new speakers’ (cf. O’Rourke and Pujolar 2013), having learned Occitan in private immersion education systems rather than through traditional forms of intergenerational transmission, although we have also included a testimony from an older L1 speaker (Oc-OA). Similarly, the Catalan data is taken from a mixture of L1 speakers and people who have acquired the language later in life, although in the Northern Catalan case, it frequently proved difficult to draw a clear distinction between the categories of ‘new speaker’ and ‘native speaker’, as

some participants reported consolidating incomplete intergenerational transmission in the home through immersion efforts (a mixture of both ‘native’ and ‘new’).²

Reference	Gender	Age
Occitan speakers		
Oc-AK	M	37
Oc-AL	F	20
Oc-AM	F	21
Oc-AN	M	26
Oc-AQ	F	27
Oc-AR	M	53
Oc-AS	M	33
Oc-AU	M	37
Oc-OA	M	78
Catalan speakers		
Cat-FP	F	51
Cat-IJ	F	70
Cat-PF	F	34
Cat-PK	M	64
Cat-SM	M	66

Table 1: Demographic details of participants selected for examination

Data and Analysis

When analysing participant discussions of the role played by standardisation in Occitan and Catalan in France, four related discursive themes emerged. Firstly, given the social differences between new speakers and native speakers, standards (used by new speakers) frequently constitute barriers to communication, with the result that cross-generational communication

² O’Rourke and Pujolar (2013: 48) explicitly characterise “new speakers” as non-native in opposition to native speakers. However, there is much work that problematises the binary between native and non-native speakers (cf. Doerr 2009), including in situations of obsolescence (cf. Makihara 2009).

is more likely to take place in the shared majority language, French. The consequences of this societal bilingualism are then addressed in terms of linguistic purism, itself dependent on the SLI, with participants keen to stress that French exerts a corrupting influence on Occitan and Catalan. Participants also conceptualise standard varieties in terms of physical space, with typological linguistic differences reinterpreted as geographical distance through processes of fractal recursivity (Irvine and Gal 2000). Finally, we will witness the discussion come full circle with speakers underscoring similarity as well as difference between standard and non-standard varieties, echoing Clyne's (1992: 1) statement that "pluricentric languages are both unifiers and dividers of people."

Given that the SLI promotes singular homogenised varieties (or in the case of polynomic models, is reliant on multiple singular varieties), it is unsurprising that standards can become barriers to communication for people who have limited access to the forms favoured in standardised varieties. The present data highlight that processes of standardisation can exacerbate feelings of division and difference within linguistic communities, resulting in communicative breakdown.

Extract 1

Cat-PF: "Du côté de mon père, ils sont catalans, d'ici. Mais mon père me l'a jamais parlé [...] J'avais essayé d'apprendre le catalan au collège, mais mon père m'avait répondu quand j'avais voulu utiliser ce que j'apprenais avec lui que c'était pas le catalan qu'il parlait lui. Donc, j'avais arrêté."³

[On my dad's side, they're Catalan from around here. But my father never spoke to me [in Catalan] [...] I tried to learn Catalan in school, but when I wanted to use what I'd learned with him, my dad told me that it wasn't the kind of Catalan he spoke. So, I stopped.]

Extract 2

Oc-AQ: "Dab lo pair si vòs, sèi pas perquè qu'ei complicat, qu'ei lo blocatge. Qu'ei completament pèc mes *voilà*, aciu n'ei pas nat problèma entà parlar occitan mes

³ For an alternative analysis of this specific piece of qualitative data that focuses on speaker claims to authenticity, see Hawkey (2018: 162-3).

dab lo pair ne m'escadi pas. Eth, qu'ensaja mes jo qu'arresponi tostemps en francés. Ne sèi pas perqué, qu'ei pèc mes qu'ei atau.”

[So with my dad, I don't know why, it's complicated, [but] it just doesn't flow. It's a real shame, but there we are. Round here, I've never had a problem speaking Occitan, but with my dad, I just can't. He tries, but I always answer in French. I don't know why, it's a shame, but that's the way it is.]

Extract 1 and Extract 2 reveal that traditional speakers of both Occitan and Catalan in France are aware of differences between the way(s) they speak and standardised versions of these languages. This 'double stigma' (Gal 2006) is a common consequence of standardisation in minority language scenarios, with minority language users feeling that their language 'fall[s] short when measured against official national languages, and [is also] inadequate when measured against the standardised version of the minority language' (Costa *et al.* 2017: 2). Native speakers can therefore show limited tolerance for the standardised varieties used by learners as a result of the SLI, giving rise to linguistic insecurity. Labov (1966) formalised the concept of linguistic insecurity, which has been defined as “a quest for linguistic legitimacy” (Francard 1997: 171, my translation), and as such, is closely linked to manifestations of the SLI. As it happens, linguistic insecurity is felt as much by speakers who use the standard as those that do not. New speakers of standard varieties feel rejected as inauthentic when compared to native speakers of minority languages (cf. Hawkey 2018: 162-165 on Catalan in France, Kasstan 2018: 387 on Francoprovençal in Switzerland). The differentiation between in-group and out-group members comes about through processes of iconisation (Irvine and Gal 2000), in which command of local features is representative of community membership: without the requisite command of the (inaccessible) local variety, new speakers are doomed to lack acceptance by older natives. Linguistic insecurity is not necessarily limited to non-native speakers of standardised varieties (as seen above) and could of course arise among older native speakers who feel excluded from new ways of speech. For native speakers of Catalan or Occitan in France, feelings of shame surrounding use of the RML are entirely predictable, given lifelong exposure to monoglossic language ideologies that favour French. This is reflected among older speakers of other regional languages of France, due in part to the “socioeconomic symbolism of French as the language of civilisation, progress and the future” (Kuter 1989: 76), which reinforces feelings of shame, as exclusion of the RML has

“been interpreted accurately [by RML speakers] as a formal condemnation of their language and culture as a whole” (Kuter 1989: 80). Moreover, older speakers feel doubly marginalised, due to the existence of a standard variety of the RML that they are unable to access, resulting in a lack of engagement between new and native speakers of these endangered varieties. Indeed, new speakers recognised that the standard is somewhat inaccessible to older native speakers:

Extract 3

Oc-AK: “Que cau estar hort motivat entà [...] apréner ua lenga e escríver ua grafia et tot aquò, qu’ei- qu’ei un grand tribalh totun.”

[You need to be really motivated to [...] learn a language and the spelling and everything. It’s a lot of work, still.]

Standardised languages spoken by RML learners are therefore clearly contrasted with the native varieties used overwhelmingly by older, rural speakers. We have seen that, at its worst, this disconnect completely inhibits communication and provokes feelings of shame and inferiority. At best, such differences merely elicit specific metacommentary. Standardisation processes in Occitan rejected lexical items that were deemed to be contact-induced interference from French, in line with purist ideologies that frequently characterise corpus planning efforts of minority language varieties. Corpus planning is highly political, and inevitably is subject to the “particularistic demands of localising ideologies” (Spolsky 2004: 36), which often leads to the isolation of speakers who may not share the same ideological concerns as the planners (in this case, purism and the avoidance of French contact forms). Both new and native speakers of Occitan are clearly aware of these competing concerns:

Extract 4

Oc-AS: “Donc, los joens qu’an lo vocabulari e a còps, qu’emplegan mots qu’an desaparecut desempuïsh dus cents ans, donc, los vielhs que son atau ‘de qué? “La husta” entà díser lo bòi, “la husta”, oh aquò la mia arrèr-arrèr-grand-mair qu’ai disè aquò mes adara ne s’emplega pas mei’. Donc, los joens qu’an sovent coneishença hons pregond deus mots, deu vocabulari pr’amor los diccionaris tot

aquò mes n'an pas mei la mestresa sintaxica e de la concordénci deus temps sustot, aquò qu'ei lo mei complicat."

[So, young people have the vocabulary and sometimes use words that disappeared two hundred years ago. So, old people are like "what?! *La husta* instead of *lo bòi* [English 'wood']?! My great-great-grandmother would've said *la husta*, but nobody says that anymore." So, young people often have a properly deep knowledge of words, of vocabulary because of dictionaries and all that, but they don't have the same command of syntax, or verb agreements above all, which is the most complicated part]

Extract 5

Oc-AR: "Qu'avem tornat a hicar en davant mots qui n'erán pas hera mei emplegats [...] mes lo monde adara qu'ei ua lenga naturau mes dab hera mei d'influença francesa [...] Que i a d'autes personas mei atjat qui disen 'a òc, qu'ei vertat, que disès aquò mes lo men pair o lo men grand-pair qu'at disè'."

[We [i.e. new speakers] have reintroduced words that weren't really used anymore [...] but people now use a more natural language, but it has lots of French influence [...] Older people say "oh yeah, that's right, you say that, like my dad or my grandad used to]

Older speakers' comments that the use of puristic vocabulary sounds outdated is a sign of the awareness of differences between standardised and non-standardised varieties, even when any resultant linguistic insecurity is not so great as to impede communication. Speaker Oc-AS (a new speaker) qualifies new speakers' avoidance of contact items as evidence of 'deeper knowledge' of vocabulary than older speakers, displaying an alignment with the purist ideals of Occitan corpus planners, not necessarily shared by native speakers. Interestingly, when expressing that advanced knowledge of vocabulary among new speakers is not matched by a command of more complex syntactic phenomena such as agreement, Oc-AS unwittingly proves his own point by not agreeing the qualifiers "hons pregond" with the feminine noun "coneishença" (where one would normally expect "coneishença honsa pregonda"). Speaker Oc-AR (also a new speaker) makes much the same point that older speakers consider purist corpus planning solutions to be outdated, and explicitly cites French influence as a key

differentiating factor between standard and non-standard Occitan speech (and displays similar difficulties with agreement, producing “personas mei *atjat*”, instead of “personas mei *atjadas*”).

This brings us to another salient theme in the data, namely that standardisation conditions the relationship of the RML with the majority language, French. The spectre of French, as the language of social and ideological dominance for centuries, looms large over participants’ discussions of their regional languages:

Extract 6

Cat-IJ: “Ici, on parle un catalan un peu francisé. Je ne crois pas que ce soit le pur.”

[Here, we speak a slightly Frenchified Catalan. I don’t think it’s the pure sort.]

Extract 7

Cat-PK: “Jo, aquí, tenia la dificultat, fora de casa, a parlar amb la gent del Rosselló, perquè el seu català em semblava massa francès [...] però el que avui penso, amb el temps m’he adonat que no existeix el meu català, jo tinc un català barrejat [...] I la sort del català és precisament de no ser tan normalitzat com el francès.”

[Here [in Northern Catalonia], out and about, I would have a hard time talking to people from Roussillon [in Catalan], because their Catalan seemed too French to me [...] But today, what I think is, with time I’ve realised that my Catalan doesn’t exist, my Catalan is a mishmash [...] And the great thing about Catalan is that it’s not as standardised as French.]

Firstly, purist ideologies regarding the ‘undesirable’ presence of French elements in RMLs is clear from the responses (right down to speaker Cat-IJ’s reference to ‘purity’). Speaker Cat-PK’s family is from Catalonia (Spain), and they emigrated to Northern Catalonia when Cat-PK was two months old. He compares the ‘overly French’ Catalan of his Northern Catalan compatriots with the ‘pure’ Catalan spoken at home. This testimony is particularly interesting when we bear in mind that Catalan almost exclusively exists in relationships of societal bilingualism with other majority languages, be that Spanish or French. Contact with Spanish would have been the norm even for the generation of Cat-PK’s parents, moving to France from the officially monolingual (Spanish) Francoist dictatorship in the 1950s. However, French

is the only language targeted by Catalan purist ideologies in France, since “influences from non-threatening languages are not considered a problem [for language purists]” (Langer and Nesse 2012: 612). As such, any influence from Spanish present in Cat-PK’s home variety of Catalan went unnoticed. Secondly, the differences between French and RMLs are underscored in terms of differing levels of standardisation. Cat-PK offers sophisticated metacommentary about the nature of the French standard as monolithic and unaccepting of variation, while Catalan is presented as more flexible. While the concept of ‘standard Catalan’ in France is much less pluricentric than that of ‘standard Occitan’, there is still an awareness (particularly on the part of speakers like Cat-PK, with origins in other Catalan-speaking territories) that Catalan more broadly is a pluricentric language, encompassing Valencian and Balearic varieties. This highlights the common-sense association between standard languages and homogeneity: pluricentric standards are seen as reflective of a lower level of speech community adherence to the SLI, rather than as reliant on multiple homogenous standards, each of which is in turn dependent on the SLI.

When discussing standardisation in Occitan and Catalan, participants drew extensively on *discourses of space and territoriality*, with the mobility of standard speakers contrasted with the immobility of older, rural non-standard speakers. This reflects the recent “fundamental shift in the spatial boundedness of life and language” (Auer and Schmidt 2010: xi) within these communities and more widely.

Extract 8

Oc-AN : "Que i a enqüèra aqueth esperit de ‘au vilatge au costat, ne parlan pas la medisha lenga’ e subertot hens la valth d’Aussau. Segurament, qu’at as arremarcat, per exemple, enter Laruns e Arudy, ne parlan pas la medisha lenga, enter eths, euh, quon sera exactament la medisha, en hèit, mes bon, ne cau pas possar los vielhs au tujar."

[There’s still this feeling of ‘the people in the next village don’t speak the same language as me’, particularly in the Ossau Valley. You’ll have probably noticed that, according to them, they don’t speak the same language in Laruns and Arudy [15 kilometres apart], when of course, it’s exactly the same. But you know, there’s no need to force old people to think the way we do]

Speaker Oc-AN (a new speaker) derides the rural mentality that ‘the people in the next village speak a different language’, claiming that any diatopic variation is in reality minimal. As a new speaker, he presents a different conceptualisation of the spatial boundedness of his own, standardised language variety as associated with a broader geographical area than the rural speakers for whom their language is only spoken in their village. Such links between language and territoriality are achieved through processes of fractal recursivity (Irvine and Gal 2000), since geographical distance is somehow reanalysed by speakers as innately reflective of typological linguistic difference. Our data show that RML standardisation scenarios are contingent on the creation and actuation of difference (cf. Gal 2017 and *axes of differentiation*). As such, it is wholly unsurprising that fractal recursivity, as the projection of difference from one level of relationship to another (Irvine and Gal 2000: 37), should characterise these very situations. For example, it is seen in the actions of RML standardisers who subject certain traditional varieties to the same marginalisation they had otherwise already received from national languages (Woolard 1998: 17, in Gal 2017: 223), creating the ‘double stigma’ mentioned above. Fractal recursivity, simply put, is how ideological difference is propagated.

However, standard varieties are not immune to reinterpretation as indicative of geographical space. At the most basic level, standardised varieties are associated with a physical space that somehow ‘belongs’ to the speech community, though even this is up for debate when it comes to standard Occitan:

Extract 9

Oc-AM: “Que i a mantuns occitanistas; que i a los occitanistas qui arreconeishen sonque l’Occitania de França e après que i a los occitanistas qui arreconeishen tot l’Occitania.

Oc-AL: “E los qui n’arreconeishen pas l’Aquitània tanben... pr’amor que’n i a qui disen ‘ben, lo gascon, n’ei pas l’occitan, qu’ei ua lenga diferenta’.”

[Oc-AM: There are lots of Occitanists: there are those who only recognise Occitan-speaking areas of France, and then those who recognise all Occitan-speaking areas.

Oc-AL: And then those who don’t recognise Aquitaine... because they say “well, Gascon isn’t Occitan, it’s a different language”]

Speakers Oc-AL and Oc-AM (both new speakers) highlight the divisions within different factions of proponents of standard varieties (broadly defined as 'Occitanists'). These differences are clearly territorial in nature, with multiple views on who should be able to share in Occitan patrimony based on geographical provenance. In addition to the fractal recursivity already mentioned above, processes of erasure (Irvine and Gal 2000) are used in the creation of linguistic difference: the exclusion of certain groups from incorporation into broad territorial notions such as Occitania renders any shared linguistic or cultural experiences invisible. Standard varieties are also interpreted as linked to geographical space by older, native speakers:

Extract 10

Oc-AQ: "Que digó *'ah mais non mais* aquiú, nosautes ne parlam pas occitan, nosautes que parlam bearnés'. Bon, ok. [...] Que's at digón en francés [...] *'ah mais oui, non, nous, ici, on parle pas occitan, je ne sais pas ce que c'est, c'est vers Toulouse là-bas. Nous, on parle le béarnais'*. Plan. Donc, que comenci a parlar e, aquiú, lo monde que's estancan; que m'espian atau 'a !', que'n i a qui digó 'a ben, escota, sèi pas 'ta vosautes, mes jo, qu'aví tot comprés de ço qu'a dit.' Donc, ne i a besonh de har grandas devisadas."

[He said 'ah but no, here, we don't speak Occitan, we speak Bearnese'. Fine, okay. They were saying in French 'oh but no, we don't speak Occitan, I don't know what that even is, it's spoken over Toulouse way. We speak Bearnese.' Fine. So I start speaking to them, and everyone stops. They look at me and are like 'oh!' And one of them says 'look, I don't know about you guys, but I understood everything she just said.' So there's really no need to make a big deal of it]

In this case, perceived typological distance between varieties is reinterpreted as spatial distance (the reverse of the Oc-AN example above) through processes of fractal recursivity. As with other new speakers, Oc-AQ claims not to share in the ideology held by native speakers that geographical difference in Occitan equates to insurmountable comprehension issues, and indeed, in this example, the older speakers are invited to question the spatial boundedness of their 'local' variety. However, it should be stated that spatial distance is not

always viewed as a direct correlate of difference between particular varieties, particularly in Catalan, where a strong cultural and linguistic community sentiment abides within the clearly defined and universally agreed boundaries of the *Països Catalans*:

Extract 11

Cat-FP: “Em sento catalana però sense diferència amb el costat francès o espanyol.

De aquí, de aquesta terra, com si no hagués la frontera pel mig”

[I feel Catalan, without any distinction between the French or Spanish sides [of the border]. [I’m] from here, from this land, as if there were no border running through the middle.]

The relatively limited access to standard (non-local) Catalan in Northern Catalonia does not preclude a sense of belonging with other Catalan speakers, based on an awareness of shared (linguistic and cultural) community membership. As such, geographical distance is not necessarily associated with a lack of intercomprehension in minority language situations in France. In the case of Catalan, the great distance between community members has created a large space of belonging for Catalan speakers that extends far beyond the national borders of France.

The use of Catalan and Occitan to create spaces of belonging brings us to the final salient theme for analysis. While we have seen that, in some cases, processes of standardisation can create barriers between speakers, the data also contained evidence that participants held the conflicting belief that any differences resulting from standardisation processes are not so great as to impede communication:

Extract 12

Oc-AU: “Que i a quauques diferenças, òc, mes bon, qu’ei normau hens ua medisha lenga.”

[There are some differences, sure, but you know, that’s normal within the same language]

Extract 13

Cat-SM: “Sem un poble i se sent... no hi ha cap problema per entendre la gent de València, de les Illes, de tot arreu”

[We’re one people and you can feel... we have no difficulty understanding people from Valencia, from the [Balearic] Islands, from all over.]

Linguistic homogeneity is not seen as the primary criterion for definition of Occitan or Catalan as a single language. Typological differences are tolerated, be these diatopic or between standard and non-standard varieties. Despite this emphasis on Occitan and Catalan as single languages, there is of course a clear awareness of the existence of heterogeneity in Occitan and Catalan. Indeed, much of the above analysis is predicated on the ideological creation of linguistic difference by members of the speech communities under investigation. However, awareness and creation of linguistic difference is not sufficient to undermine the sense of shared speech community and space of belonging, particularly in the case of Catalan. Finally, acceptance of typological heterogeneity within the language system is not just expressed by new speakers familiar with standard varieties:

Extract 14

Oc-OA: “Que preferam pas mesclar tot. Deishar apréner lo patoès de la Calandreta coma an a apréner. Jo, que’us posh parlar lo patoès mes *enfin*, qu’arribam a se compréner, *hein*.”

[We prefer not to mix everything up. Let them learn *patoès* in the Calandreta the way they need to. I speak [my own] *patoès*, but I mean, we all manage to understand each other, right?]

Differences between how students of Occitan learn the language (which he refers to using his preferred glossonym, *patoès*) and speaker Oc-OA’s own variety are accepted as necessary. Standardisation is viewed as a required tool in the re-establishment of intergenerational transmission of the language, and any distance between his own variety and the standard are downplayed. As such, a belief that standards do not impede communication is entirely compatible with recognition of the differences between standard and non-standard varieties.

Conclusions

The specific situation faced by Occitan and Catalan as RMLs in France – in which (broadly speaking) older native speakers use non-standard varieties, and younger new speakers conform more closely to standardised speech – presents complex challenges for the widespread implementation of the SLI. Throughout the analysis, we have seen that the SLI accords Bourdieusian legitimacy to specific language varieties through the discursive creation of difference (cf. Gal 2017 and *axes of differentiation*). Returning to Bourdieu's (1989) notion of linguistic market, Costa *et al.* (2017: 6) remind us that the standardisation processes of hegemonic languages consisted of a consolidation of their 'value', and were 'bolstered through [...] the creation of unified economic and cultural markets.' However, standardisation of hitherto minoritised varieties *redefines* value in the linguistic market – the present data has allowed us to see examples of such renegotiation play out in 'real time', with speakers' "counterhegemonic moves re-working the valence of the qualities that axes [of differentiation] represent" (Gal 2017: 233). Focusing on the values outlined in Gal's (2017) *axis of modernity* (presented above), we see that in Extract 10, Oc-AQ challenges older native speakers' views of Occitan as 'emplaced' or 'particularistic', presenting an argument that the language is in fact more 'universal' than they may have imagined. In Extract 7, Cat-PK once attributed qualities of 'universality' and 'homogeneity' to his own form of Catalan, and disparaged Northern Catalan for its supposed contrasting properties of 'particularity' and 'emplacedness.' However, he went on to re-assign positive value to the 'minoritised' side of the axis – emplacedness and particularity are now to be embraced as corollaries of their associated traits of authenticity and tradition. Attempts to standardise these minority varieties thus result in individuals' complex renegotiation of value in the Bourdieusian linguistic market, attestable at the individual, discursive level.⁴

⁴ It should be pointed out that the present analysis underscores the similarities between Occitan and Catalan as RMLs of France. However, there are numerous ideological fronts on which the two language communities could be seen to differ, also with consequences for the linguistic market. For example, in light of the current Catalan independence movement, Catalan nationalist discourses circulate widely across the border in Spain. Moreover, Catalan speakers in France have access to extensive media in Catalan, thanks to increasingly deterritorialised spaces online (though engagement with these among rural speakers is likely still marginal). Such an awareness of forming part of an international community (which is not the same for Occitan) could lead to a revaluing of the Catalan language in terms of its level of overt prestige, thus renegotiating its position in the linguistic market. An in-depth discussion of the potential prestige of Catalan in France can be found in Hawkey (2018: 80-86).

All three of Irvine and Gal's (2000) semiotic processes are invoked in these complex situations of RML standardisation. Linguistic difference is created by *erasure*, wherein traditional speakers' experiences are seemingly discounted from the new standard (to which they have limited access). Differences between standard and non-standard varieties are reanalysed as spatial discourses, through *fractal recursivity*, with the consequence that standard varieties are perceived as geographically distant and inauthentic. Such inauthenticity is a result of indexical links brought about by *iconisation*, in which command of local, traditional linguistic features (not the new standard) is seen as the ultimate marker of authenticity. The SLI is thus not successfully enacted and standard varieties fail to acquire legitimacy among older native speakers. This has unintended consequences – while standards were created as a means of ensuring the vitality of the obsolescent minority varieties in question, the difference discursively created between standard and non-standard varieties can lead to communicative breakdown, with participants resorting to the majority code of French. However, pluricentricity complicates the nature of this link between legitimacy and spatial discourses, and it is not necessarily the case that a standard variety's typological (and perceived geographical) distance from a local speech variety results in a lack of legitimacy. Indeed, language users can claim membership of a broad speech community, as represented by the existence of a typologically (and geographically) distant standard. Alternatively, they may decide that the distance between the standard and their local variety is so great that the standard is devoid of all legitimacy – this leads to the problems outlined above and may motivate the creation of more locally reflective standards (e.g. Gascon, and the current burgeoning standardisation efforts in Northern Catalan).

Lippi-Green (2012: 67) states that, in common with other ideologies, the SLI “[promotes] the needs and interests of a dominant group or class at the expense of marginalised groups, by means of disinformation and misrepresentation of those non-dominant groups.” The SLI, when applied to languages in a position of existing societal dominance is a classic control mechanism, designed to maintain hegemonic order. When applied to minoritised varieties, such as Occitan and Catalan in France, the SLI seeks to challenge and subvert the linguistic hegemony by according legitimacy to regional languages. However, this article has shown multiple ways in which this can fail. Challenges faced by speakers of minority languages in France are grounded in centuries of ideological subordination. Tackling these underlying ideologies of linguistic insecurity among speakers of

Occitan and Catalan in France may well hold the key to reversing the misfortune that has led to these languages' current situation of obsolescence.

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